Minister Briefing – Proposed Way Forward: RCMP Federal Policing Program
January 26, 2022

Scenario Note

Overview:
You are scheduled to brief the Minister of Public Safety on January 26, 2022 about the ongoing efforts to modernize the RCMP's approach to fulfilling its federal mandate.

Background:
As Canada's federal police force, the RCMP is tasked to do what no other police of jurisdiction in Canada is mandated to do, which involves targeting the highest level criminal threats. The mandate is executed under the auspices of the Federal Policing Program (FP) and Specialized Policing Services by approximately 5,000 employees, and is guided by over 150 statutes and acts of Parliament.

Considerations:
Despite targeted investments and internal organizational efforts, the expectations, breadth of mandate, and complexity of the threat environment continue to outpace capabilities and capacity. The perceived expectations that the RCMP can continue to effectively achieve and/or further broaden its mandate despite stagnant annual reference levels and diminished overall resource capacity needs to be reset.

Additional priorities, which are outside of the core federal mandate, have been on-boarded over the years, including border integrity, protective policing and major events. FP is also tasked with supporting broader Government objectives, priorities, and strategies, often having to integrate them into existing operational priorities and divert resources. The result is a significant reduction in the RCMP's ability to shift resources in an effective and efficient manner that sees tangible, repeatable results for Canadians.

FP is striving to tackle an unprecedented criminal threat environment characterized by a growing diversity and convergence of national security threats, sophistication of and professionalization in transnational organized crime networks, and a seismic shift in the cybercrime landscape. To counter these threats effectively, the RCMP is working to focus its resources on identifying cornerstone functions, individuals, and services in criminal and terrorist networks to target and disrupt both in the physical and digital space.

The erosion of the FP Program over the past decade, across multiple governments, has further restricted the RCMP's ability to maintain and upgrade capabilities required to be an effective, modern federal police force. The operating environment, coupled with internal/external pressures and competing priorities, are challenging the RCMP's ability to respond today as well as the sustainability of future FP operations.

Internal efforts to date have helped gain significant ground. However, these steps are insufficient to address the capabilities and capacity gaps, limiting the extent to which the RCMP can maintain consistent coverage across all operational and government priorities. Contributing to a safe and prosperous Canada through appropriately resourced federal law enforcement capabilities (including meeting inclusivity and diversity priorities) will better position the RCMP to refocus and renew its federal mandate, tackling the highest levels of criminal threats to Canada and ensuring sound stewardship supported by evidence based-decision making and transparency and accountability.

Current Status:

FP continues to advance its efforts to pivot away from “moment in time” crime threats (e.g., tobacco smuggling, air marshals, extremist travelers, cross-border gun smuggling) in favour of investment in operational capabilities to maximize organizational flexibility, effectiveness and results for Canadians. This work coalesces around:

- building the foundation to effectively tackle the highest level of criminality impacting Canadians at home and abroad,
- accelerating change towards becoming a world leading police service
- renewing the trust and confidence in program delivery to Canadians, and;
- addressing increasing sustainability concerns

The RCMP commitment remains focused on three priority threat areas: National Security, Transnational and Serious Organized Crime (including money laundering/proceeds of crime), and Cybercrime.

Focusing investments on specific crime threats and priorities perpetuates long-term challenges given the sophisticated and interconnected nature of the modern threat environment. Rather than tying funding to particular criminal commodities, and the inherent reporting conditions that tie the RCMP to those activities, long-term funding solutions would see FP develop its core capabilities by investing in enhanced intelligence and investigative capacity. This provides the organizational flexibility to shift focus between priorities without costly/restrictive overhauls and would ensure a focus on the highest priorities

FP is concurrently working to restore capacity and leverage civilian expertise to enhance capabilities across core functional areas such as intelligence, investigations, administrative, and technical operations, where appropriate and within current funding level.

Opening Remarks

- Thank you, Minister Mendicino, for the opportunity to brief you today on a proposed way forward to significantly advance the RCMP's core federal mandate; the mandate bestowed to the RCMP that is purely federal in nature and in place to support national interests.

- Cemented in the *RCMP Act*, the core mandate of the RCMP is its federal mandate. The Federal Policing program is responsible for delivering on that mandate and is comprised of just under 5,000 employees, located domestically and internationally.

- As Canada's federal police force, the RCMP is tasked to do what no other police of jurisdiction in Canada is mandated to do which involves targeting the highest level criminal threats to Canada, Canadians, and Canadian interests both at home and abroad.

- The reality is that the RCMP continues to face several challenges to fully realizing its potential across all dimensions of the federal mandate. Several factors, many of which are outside of RCMP control, have presented the Federal Policing program with challenges and a significant erosion of its resource affordability and sustainability for over a decade. These include multiple cost saving initiatives, which have had a disproportionate impact on the federal mandate, and growing demands for federal law enforcement leadership and reform.

- As a result, the RCMP's Federal Policing program is challenged to continuously reconcile capacity and sustainability concerns with the continued obligation to deliver on a multitude of federal priorities.

- This issue is set against the backdrop of an increasingly sophisticated and interconnected characterized threat landscape.

- What were once the tools of sophisticated actors are now employed commonplace across multiple domains - Encrypted communications, the darkweb, digital currency and cryptocurrencies, drones, ransomware, complex money laundering schemes, to name a few. The crimes are unchanged, but the methods outpace law enforcement's capability to detect and disrupt them.

- We are committed to supporting the commitments in your Mandate Letter, which are directly related to these challenges.

- Promoting economic security and combatting foreign interference aligns with our efforts with prioritizing Foreign actor interference investigations and International partnerships in this space, and expanding our efforts against foreign investments that are injurious to National Security.

- We continue to place strong attention towards securing our borders, and collectively tackling the firearms issue with our US and domestic partners and through enhanced intelligence capabilities.

- We are also aligned with your plans to advance the National Cyber Security Action Plan, by enhancing our investigative capacity issues and through the hiring of civilian investigators with expertise.

- As outlined in your mandate letter, we continue to support the efforts against the complex and evolving threats, including to our economy and national security space, by prioritizing investigations on CETs, IMVE, Money Laundering, Capital Markets, Ransomware, and border security among others.

- We are also committed to meeting your objective for the RCMP to be an accountable, transparent, diverse, and inclusive police force by adhering to the numerous public reviews, by modernizing our Federal outreach programs, and by aligning with the force's recruitment and retention efforts in this space.

- All these considerations taken together, is why the RCMP is seeking Ministerial support for a phased approach to bolstering the Federal Policing program, which would include investments to restore federal policing capacity and capabilities.

- The ultimate goal - to enable a more agile and responsive federal police agency that will support national and public interests and a safer and more secure Canada.

- I will now turn to Deputy Commissioner Mike Duheme to speak in greater detail to the proposed way forward.